

INSIDE PEACE CORPS

Acting Director's Message

Welcome back to *Inside Peace Corps*, where we share updates on our work, both at headquarters and in the countries where our Volunteers are invited to serve. Today is International Day of Friendship, a good day to reflect on the power that relationships have to achieve world peace. I am incredibly grateful that the Peace Corps has given us the gift of friendships that span the globe. As a Country Director in Malawi, I heard countless Volunteers share that the relationships they developed with their host community – with local leaders, neighbors, counterparts, and friends – were what they valued most from service. In a similar way, I was frequently approached by Malawians seeking to reconnect with a Volunteer with whom they had worked side-by-side.

As we continue to support staff, partners, and communities around the globe and navigate the ongoing complexities of COVID-19, we are very cognizant of the disparate health, education, food security, and economic impacts of the pandemic. Now is a time when the strong connections we made through our service are so meaningful. Many among us have kept these connections active, even those for whom decades have passed since they left service. On this International Day of Friendship, I encourage all of us to acknowledge the difficult times felt by our friends around the world and at home and to emphasize how much these people mean to us. I am grateful for your camaraderie today as you step *Inside Peace Corps*.

In Loving Memory

The Peace Corps lost a dear friend and loyal employee on June 29, 2021. Jeremy "Jerry" M. Black demonstrated a lifelong commitment to service, first serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Comoros and later working for the Peace Corps in the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support and, most recently, in the Office of the Inspector General. Along his journey, Jerry touched the lives of Peace Corps family members around the world who will remember Jerry for his passion for promoting a deeper understanding between people across and within borders. Read Jerry's obituary [here](#).



Developments

The Peace Corps Takes Steps to Return to Service Overseas Beginning with Belize. At the request of the Government of Belize, we plan to return Volunteers to Belize to engage in literacy work, helping schools recover following disruptions to the education system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the global evacuation in March 2020, the Peace Corps developed robust health, safety, and security standards that must be met prior to returning to countries of service, and Belize has met these criteria. Conditions are being continuously monitored. In addition, our global programming is being adapted, as necessary, to respond to local conditions and priorities of the countries where our Volunteers are invited to serve. Read more about the return to service in Belize and our reentry criteria [here](#).

John F. Kennedy Service Awards Nomination Period Now Open. We are soliciting nominations of returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), returned Peace Corps Response Volunteers, and current or former Peace Corps staff for the 2021 John F. Kennedy Service Awards. Established in 2006, these awards will honor six members of the Peace Corps community who have made exceptional contributions toward realizing our mission and three goals. Read more about the 2021 awards or submit a nomination [here](#). All nominations are due by August 13.

Staff Participate in Grassroot Soccer's "Leveling the Playing Field" Training of Trainers. This month, 40 "Master Coach" staff members from 12 African Peace Corps posts completed a virtual "Leveling the Playing Field" workshop organized in partnership with Grassroot Soccer (GRS). An adolescent health organization that leverages the power of soccer to deliver critical information around HIV/AIDS, malaria, and, now, COVID-19, GRS offers health education curricula that Volunteers and Peace Corps Counterparts often implement in their host communities. In addition to the comprehensive Training of Trainer sessions, staff were also oriented on GRS' new COVID-19 Response curriculum. Through the workshop, our staff gained the knowledge and certification necessary to train future "coaches" in these curricula, which will include other Peace Corps staff and, ultimately, Volunteers and community members. To learn about our partnership with GRS, read the 5-year report [here](#).

After First-Ever Consultation, Peace Corps Develops Tribal Nations Action Plan. In light of the Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships, the Peace Corps, in coordination with eight other federal agencies, hosted our first ever Tribal Nation Consultation. Following an open dialogue with 61 participants representing 10 Tribal Nations from five states, we developed a Peace Corps Tribal Nations Action Plan that outlines our planned activities to increase engagement and strengthen relations with Tribal Nations over the coming years. Included among these activities is an analysis of Native-identifying potential applicants, Volunteers, and RPCVs to better understand their interests, needs, and potential barriers to their service with the Peace Corps. Read more about our strategic partnerships [here](#).



The Peace Corps in Photos

In The Works

Programming, Training, and Evaluation (PT&E) Alignment – Since 2016, we have undertaken a field-informed, multi-year effort to better fulfill our service commitments to host countries and to better prepare Volunteers to achieve the three goals of the Peace Corps. With the involvement of over 17 offices at headquarters and 63 posts overseas, we are aligning and standardizing our programming, training, and evaluation (PT&E) system. Through this effort, we have updated how our country posts design and implement projects that address locally defined priorities. The new standard planning tool is a logical project framework (LPF), based on a theory of change, that has clear objectives and performance metrics. LPFs are developed and reviewed through a consultative process, involving host government representatives, non-governmental organizations, other project sector experts, counterparts, Volunteers, and staff.

This effort also updates the way we design and deliver training for Volunteers. Staff from 47 Peace Corps country posts contributed to the new approach that plans training and assessment across the entire 27 months of service, from pre-departure through close of service. The system is based on a set of Volunteer skills/competencies that are the new global standard for Volunteer learning and performance. The competencies are grounded in the Peace Corps' core expectations and Volunteers' LPFs. They also include health, safety and security, language, and intercultural competence, diversity, equity and inclusion (ICDEI) as critical competencies that will be developed and evaluated throughout service. This system expands opportunities for ongoing Volunteer learning and development, and creates clear, consistent standards and support for Volunteer performance throughout service.

Through the aligned PT&E system we are enhancing our culture of learning among partners, communities, and Volunteers in a way that will help us to make data-driven programmatic decisions to improve accountability to host communities. To learn more about our commitment to Volunteer preparation and training, visit our [webpage](#) dedicated to this topic.

Enhanced Safety and Security Systems and Protocols – As part of an ongoing effort to enhance risk mitigation measures and to improve responses to Volunteers who are the victims of crimes, we are making a number of improvements to our systems in preparation for the return of Volunteers to the field. These include: implementation of a new Security Incident Management System (SIMS) to better respond to, manage, and document crimes against Volunteers; development of options for Volunteer victims of sexual assault to review reports documenting the crimes they experience; and new checks and balances to improve the consistency and quality of services provided to Volunteers in the wake of a security incident. The agency is also focusing on improving host family and community orientations. Finally, we continue to work with the Office of Inspector General to close outstanding recommendations related to the health and safety of Volunteers. For more information on our commitment to the health and safety of our Volunteers, visit our [webpage](#) dedicated to this topic.

In the News

Peace Corps is making headlines! Here are a few recent stories.

(Clicking any of the news links will take you to a third-party website.)

American Association of Retired Persons

Peace Corps Volunteers Idled by Pandemic Turn to Vaccinating Americans

Harlem World Magazine

Harlem Carole Anne "Aziza" Reid Honored with Peace Corps' Prestigious Lillian Carter Award

NBC Washington

Peace Corps Teams with FEMA to Fight COVID-19



[Lillian Carter's] experience in India infected my entire family with, really, the spirit of the Peace Corps. It's the idea that we find the common humanity everywhere and that you can do good work anywhere. You can look across the globe and find connections that you might not believe you had...

– Jason Carter, RPCV South Africa '98-'00; Great-grandson of Lillian Carter, RPCV India '66-'68

Stories

No Peace Corps Volunteer's service or story is the same. In recognition of International Day of Friendship today, we highlight two RPCVs' stories of camaraderie during service:



Her American Sister

"Before we both knew we would be spun away from here, inevitably and intractably. We both knew that our intersection was a blink in the vast breadth of our lives. I was her American sister, she my Nepalese *behini*, but only for an instant."



Solidaridad

"*Solidaridad*. It's a hard word to say in Spanish, at least for me. Too many syllables, and letter "D"s. But if I was forced to encapsulate the Dominican experience in one word, I would be hard-pressed to find one that more aptly sums up this island nation."

RPCVs are always encouraged to share their stories of service. In celebration of the Peace Corps' 60th Anniversary, RPCVs are also asked to help compile a packing list for future Peace Corps Volunteers. From a guitar to an open mind, send your packing suggestions to stories@peacecorps.gov along with your name, country and years of service, and a short explanation of your packing list item.

[Read more stories →](#)

Events

We host a variety of events for prospective Volunteers, RPCVs, and other Peace Corps audiences. Check out some recent and upcoming virtual events involving the Peace Corps:

June 24 – The Peace Corps 2021 Lillian Carter Award Ceremony (recording)

August 18 – Pathways to Peace Corps: Serving without a 4-year Degree (registration)

September 8 – Loret Miller Ruppe Speaker Series Featuring General Stanley McChrystal (registration)

September 20 – Rotary-Peace Corps Week: Q&A with Rotary General Secretary and Acting Director of Peace Corps (registration)

September 23-25 – National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) Peace Corps Connect 2021 (information)

September 29 – 2021 John F. Kennedy Service Award for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Ceremony (information)

[View all events →](#)



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